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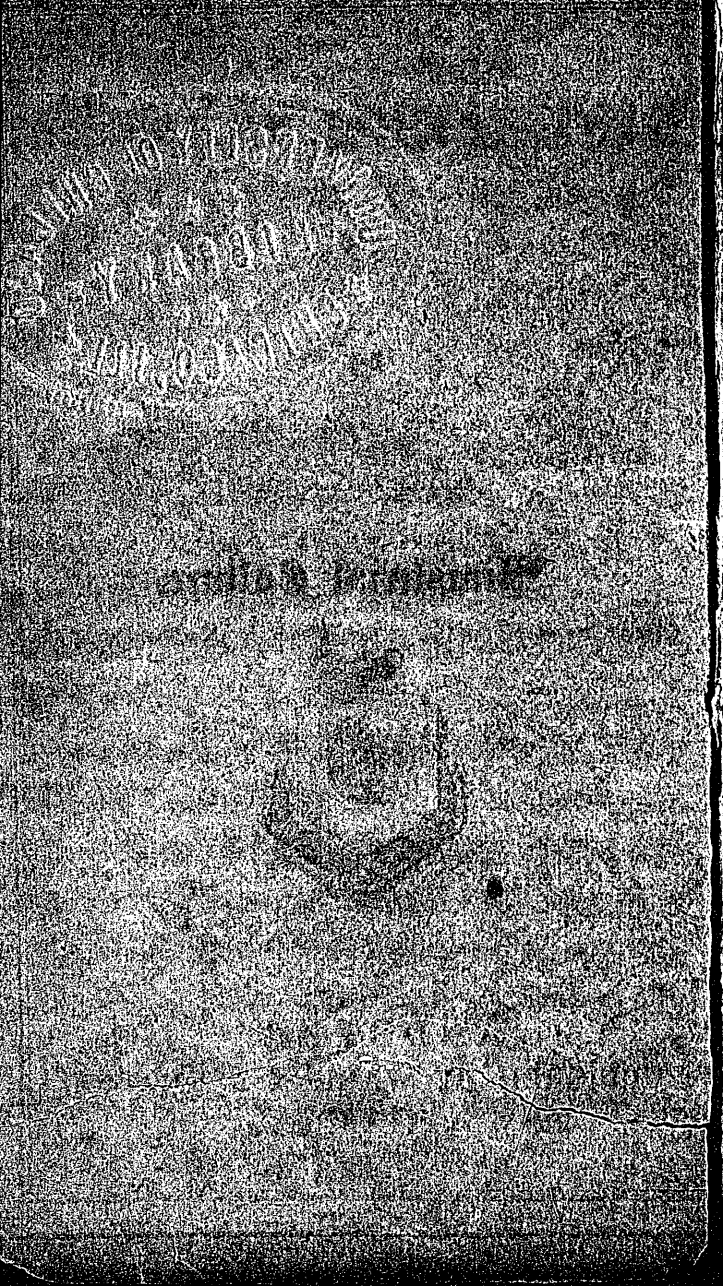
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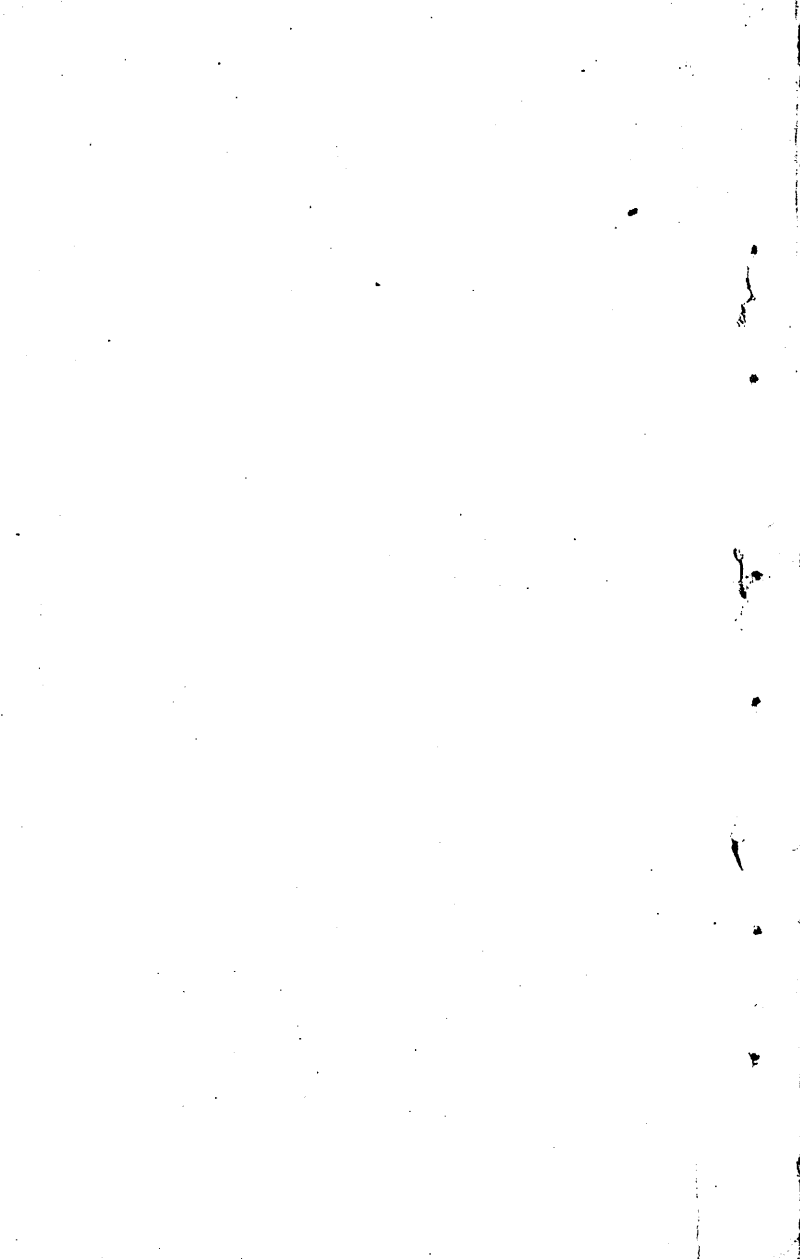
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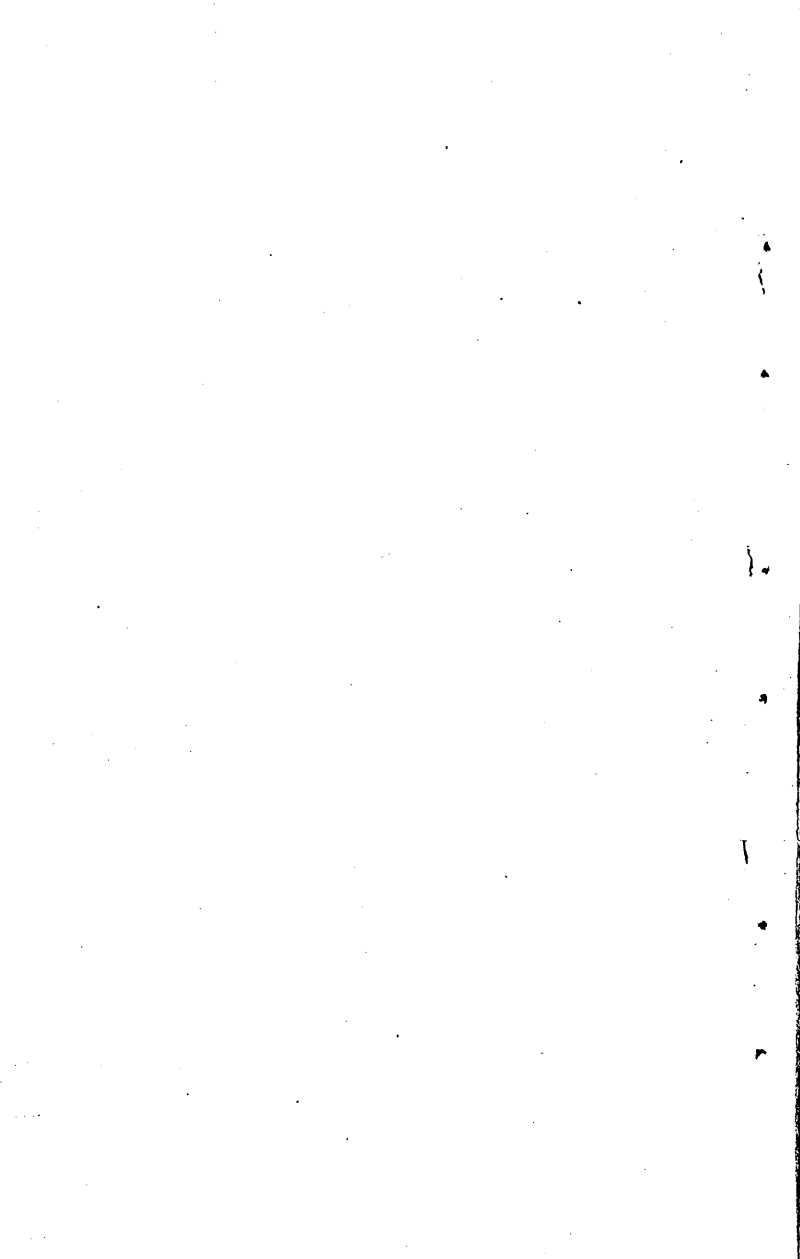
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NOTE.

The following is the substance of an Address delivered to the Senior Class in the Andover Theological Seminary, July 13, 1867, at the close of the Annual Lectures on Sacred Rhetoric. It is republished from "The Congregationalist and Recorder."

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MINISTERIAL CULTURE.

GENTLEMEN, I complete to-day the Courses of Homiletic Lectures, the delivery of which you have made a pleasure to me by the kindness of your attention to them. I am constrained by certain convictions which are often a burden to me, to add a few words of comment upon the general drift of the instructions to which you have listened, and the spirit in which they should be applied to your life's work.

My treatment of the theory of preaching has grown up in a course of years, on that model of homiletic teaching which

the Calvinistic mind has generally held to be essential to the training of a preacher. The ideal of a preacher which I have uniformly had in view, is that of a Christian scholar using his scholarship with the aim of a Christian orator. I have spoken to a group of scholarly hearers; and have aimed to help you to a more enlarged growth of scholarly culture. I do this every year, with an increasing conviction that, as it respects intellectual preparation for the pulpit, this high Calvinistic ideal of a preacher is the true one.

At the same time I have found alongside of this conviction another, which is also deepening with years. I have tried in various parts of these Lectures to give you a hint of it in the way of warning. It is, that our Protestant denominations are not in all respects *using* this theory

of high culture in the ministry in a Christian way. Somehow or other, it is not working altogether right in practice. I acknowledge some alarm at the prospect before us, if the present drift of things, in one respect, is not arrested. A scholarly ministry, taken as a whole, we must confess *is working away from the unscholarly masses of the people*. Perhaps it would seem more strictly accurate to say that the unscholarly masses are working away from it. But practically this makes no difference. The ministry is in its conception aggressive, not receptive. The commission is, "Go"; not "Wait."

You have heard from eye-witnesses of the relations of the masses to the pulpit in the Protestant portions of Continental Europe. In Great Britain the fact is attracting more attention every year, that

the clergy and people are drifting asunder ; and I repeat, it makes no difference which is anchored, if the other is moving. The religious press of England and Scotland confesses the sundering. Infidel critics triumph over it. All parties discuss it, as a fact which no candid man will dispute. Reformers and statesmen are looking about them for other agencies than those of the Church and the Pulpit, to elevate the degraded and control the " dangerous " classes.

Is it not an ominous event, that, in a country which Christianity has civilized for a thousand years, vast masses of society should be so vast and so brutal as to be classified in the national mind by that title " dangerous ? " They are no longer thought of by statesmen as objects of hope, scarcely even of compassion, but

simply as a threat hanging over the safety of the rest. They are given up to the police.

In our own country, with the advantages of our voluntary system in the support of the gospel, the same widening of the distance between the Protestant ministry and the masses is palpable. Politicians accept the fact, and act upon it. The secular press, to a great extent, treats it flippantly. Meanwhile what are our churches and ministry doing about it? Much that is cheering, but somewhat that is not so.

In the Episcopal Church, it is frequently claimed as the mission peculiar to that branch of the Church to reach the cultivated strata of society.

Episcopal wisdom charges upon the

churches of Puritan origin, that they have in them the elements of low life; that their historical antecedents are not respectable; that their founders were low-born and low-bred; that their social affinities are not those of culture and refinement; and that therefore a reaction from them is periodically inevitable in the direction of the Episcopate and the Prayer-book. From such argument for Episcopacy one might reasonably infer that the chief glory of a church is to gather to its bosom the *elite* of cultivated life; to minister to the masses by churchly authority rather than by sympathy; and to rescue from low-bred sects, the "Martyrs of Disgust."

Yet in our own churches, and in the whole Presbyterian group, the present drift of things is, not altogether, but to

a considerable extent, in the same direction. The undercurrent may still be right in the main, but many of the surface-currents, and certain local currents, are not so.

Our tastes in architecture ; our craving for artistic music ; in some cases a hankering for liturgies ; worldly views of what constitutes ministerial success ; and more than all else, the principle of elective affinity in the gathering of churches, by which identity of social rank is made to mark practically the outline of church-membership, and still more sharply that of Christian fellowship—are all tending the same way. It is not difficult to see *whither*. More than one minister and theological student and layman, who have abandoned churches of Puritan origin, have confessed to me that

they were led to the change, not by convictions of conscience, but by cravings of taste. They wished to release themselves or their families from association with the "low-born and low-bred."

Yet the complaint is universal among us, that a less proportion of the uneducated masses of American birth is to be found in Calvinistic churches than was found there thirty years ago. Christian men are innocently wondering, and inquiring, "Why is this?" We are entering upon an era of experiments for remedying the evil. I have not a word to say against those experiments. They may all be excellent in their way. They are all welcome as evidence that good men are feeling after the right way. But this fact is observable in them thus far: that to a large extent — not entirely —

they either leave the clergy out of the question, or assign to them a false position.

We are creating vast organizations of lay-laborers, Sabbath-schools, Mission-schools, Mission-chapels, Young Men's Christian Associations, Colporteurs, Bible readers, etc. to reach the masses of the people, *because* of the admitted fact that our pulpit, as administered to our own wants and tastes, does *not* reach them. We are working, in great part, upon a system which takes it for granted that our own clergy, in our own churches, *cannot* reach them. In some cases, the avowal is whispered that we do not *want* to reach them *there*.

Even in the Methodist churches, the same complaint begins to be heard. Recent Methodist authorities say that they are losing, in some degree, their ancient

hold upon the lower orders of the people. They affirm that the spirit of their denomination is rising in the direction of refinement, of education, of social position, and pecuniary beneficence; but they are not lifting the masses with them. They are simply soaring overhead. The ideal of an educated ministry being of recent origin in the Methodist Church, many earnest friends of culture there think they see that the work of clerical education is not wholly a gain. They acknowledge, that as their ministers become more highly cultivated their tendency is to work away from those portions of the people which are not so. Like seeks its like. The danger is that nature will outweigh grace. Their educated preachers and their humble classes are in peril of parting company, because they are in peril of losing sympathy.

In view of these facts, it is not strange if the whole question of clerical education undergoes revision. It must not be wondered at if many Christian laymen infer that our process of cultivation is a destructive one. It is not unnatural that one of them should say, as he did: "Our ministers are educated to death"; or that another should write: "They are so trained as to make it difficult for the churches to support them with their expensive tastes"; or that a third should believe that "they are so cultivated as to indispose them to become pastors of rural churches"; or that a fourth should affirm, that "they are so made over, by ten years of scholastic seclusion, as to wither their godly sympathy with the people everywhere." All this, and much more, is said by laymen in their conver-

sations and correspondence on the subject. You perceive inklings of it now and then in the reports of public assemblies.

I do not endorse these criticisms ; far from it. Indeed, so far as my observation goes, the men who make them do not express in them their own personal wants, but what they suppose to be the wants of others. I have yet to find the first layman, with intelligence enough to have a reasonable opinion on such a subject, who wants any other than the first order of intellect and the most perfect culture in the person of his own pastor.

Still, such criticisms *contain* a truth ; and they may become wholly true, unless the clergy prevent that result, each in his own experience. The youthful clergy have a special responsibility respecting it. Dr. Emmons said that he never expected

to convince a man of anything which he did not already believe after the age of forty years. There is less of hyperbole in this as applied to educated mind than as applied to the illiterate. Clerical mind, especially after spending fifteen years in the pulpit, exercising there the authority of a religious teacher, is apt, from that time onward, to *float* on currents of opinion formed and *set* during those years. The junior ministry, therefore, must commonly change the currents of clerical practice, if they need change.

I wish, therefore, to commit these homiletic discussions to you with the most solemn charge, that you receive them with a spirit of *practical good sense and of practical piety*. These two things are the substance of the whole matter.

I have tried to proportion the theory

of preaching as symmetrically as I could. But in a thousand applications of it, you must do the work of adjusting its proportions. You must qualify rules. You must balance principles. You must interpret precepts in the light of circumstances. You must judge when it is a use, and when it is an abuse, of any truth you may have heard here, to apply it to your own practice. Good sense and piety should shape your applications of it, as of all knowledge; and always should so shape them as to *make* your pulpit reach the masses of the people.

I tell you frankly, that no theory of preaching is worth a farthing which cannot be worked practically to that result. No theory of ministerial culture is either scriptural or philosophical or sensible which cannot bridge the gulf

between the clergy and the masses. The pulpit never can accomplish its mission on any such theory — never.

The methods of lay labor which are so popular at present for the evangelizing of the masses, and which in the main are so hopeful a sign of our times, are defective, and will fail, just so far as they assume to confine to laymen the duty of personal contact with the lower orders, and to exalt the clergy into an upper layer of influence, in which they shall simply be preachers to select hearers, and teachers of teachers ; reaching the people only by proxy. No preacher can afford that kind of seclusion. Such an adjustment of powers in the Church is hierarchical. The philosophy of it is priestly. It is a return to the genius of Judaism and of Paganism. Nothing

could doom the clergy to a wasted life more fatally.

If I could be persuaded that the theory of ministerial culture which I have tried to represent to you could result legitimately in any such drifting asunder of the pulpit and the lower orders of society, I would abandon the whole of it. I would drop it as I would a viper. A preacher had better work in the dark, with nothing but mother-wit, a quickened conscience, and a Saxon Bible to teach him what to do and how to do it, than to vault into an aerial ministry, in which only the upper classes shall know or care anything about him. You had better go and *talk* the gospel, in the Cornish dialect, to those miners who told the witnesses summoned by the committee of the English Parliament, that

they had "never heard of Mister Jesus Christ in these mines," than to do the work of the Bishop of London. *Make* your ministry reach the people; in the forms of purest culture if you can, but *reach the people*; with elaborate doctrine if possible, but *reach the people*; with classic speech if it may be, but *reach the people*. The great problem of life to an educated ministry is, to make their culture a *power* instead of a *luxury*. Our temptations are all one way. Our mission is all the other way.

It is not, then, less education that our clergy need. It is inconceivable to me how any educated man can see relief from our present dangers, or from any dangers, in that direction. Ignorance is a remedy for nothing. So, imperfection of culture is always a misfortune.

Some remarks recently made at the meeting of our General Association of Massachusetts, suggesting, if correctly reported, a reduction of the term of years in our seminaries, for *all* students of theology, and hinting at the need of "recovery" from the influence of the training in Theological Seminaries, certainly had not the wisdom of the serpent. Every truly educated man knows better. We do not want inferior culture if we can get anything else. The world will not bear it from us when it can command anything else. But we do need *consecration* of culture. This is the thing which the world is blindly craving. We need subjection of the personal tastes which culture creates. We need contentment under the limitations of culture which the necessities of labor in our profession demand.

Above all, we need faith in the Christian ideal of culture which measures its value by its use ; its dignity by its lowliness ; its height in character by its depth of reach after souls below it. This was Christ's own ideal of culture. He possessed no other ; he respected no other ; he denounced every other most fearfully. Not an act of his life, not a word from his lips, gives any evidence that he would have tolerated the awful anomaly of clerical life, in which a man ministers placidly in a palatial church, to none but elect and gilded hearers, with all the paraphernalia of elegance around him, and with culture expressed in the very fragrance of the atmosphere, while " Five Points " and " Boweries " and " Ann Streets " are growing up uncared for by any labors of his, within hearing of his organ and his quartette.

Our guard against the peril here indicated, then, is spiritual, as distinct from intellectual, in its nature. The cry should be, not "Less intellect! Less study! Less culture!" But simply "More heart! More prayer! More godliness! More subjection of culture to the salvation of those who have little or none of it!"

I beg you to ponder the subject in this spirit; and to *begin* your ministry with a bold rejection of everything that implies your personal seclusion from the poor and the ignorant classes. Reject every theory of preaching which contemplates that seclusion as a necessity. Rectify the proportions of any theory, which, though true in its parts, yet, as a whole, blocks your way to the hearts of the people. Prune down any theory, which for reasons yet unknown to you, *you* can-

not work to advantage, so as to make your way to the people's hearts. Stretch your theory to the facts of your life's work, be they what they may. Hold no theory for a day which is not elastic enough to compass the necessities of your position. I have failed in my endeavors to help you if you have derived from my words any such theory.

Esteem no institutions sacred which set you above and aloof from the commonalty. Revere no clerical usages, no laws of etiquette, no guards of your reputation, no proprietary claims, which require you to hold back from personal labor with the humblest or the most guilty. Yield to no churchly sentiments, or whispered arrangements, or tacit understandings, or unuttered disgusts, through which churches shall be gathered by the law of

social affinity instead of the law of benevolence ; so that their pastors cannot get at the poor and the degraded, because there are none such within hearing.

Refuse to be pastors of such churches if they insist upon their exclusiveness. Accept rather the calls of the "low-born and low-bred." Let it be said of you : "This man eateth with publicans and sinners." Refuse to be tempted by churches in which pageantry of architecture, pomp of worship, operatic music, patrician caste, sumptuous dress, and other forms of unchristian luxury will conspire against you, making it impossible for the poor to be there if they would, and making them unwilling to be there if they could. The man was never born who could long carry the load of such a church as that, with a Christ-like love of souls in his heart.

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